Colleen McGough Wood comes by her talent for building things quite naturally. For five generations, the McGough family has developed and constructed some of the Twin Cities’ most visible structures. In Colleen’s case, however, her ability does not involve erecting stores or offices. It involves building relationships, families, and a better world for children with disabilities.

As co-chair of PACER Center’s Benefit Committee for the past two years, Colleen has found many opportunities to build relationships. As part of her position, she contacts corporations to seek support for the important work PACER does for children with disabilities. “We use personal stories to show how much PACER has changed our lives,” she said.

Laying the Foundation

Her own story started three years ago when one of her five daughters became pregnant. In her seventh month, “my daughter found out she was having a little guy with severe disabilities,” Colleen said. Jacob (pictured right) was born in March, 2002, with two serious brain problems: septo-optic dysplasia and schizencephaly. As a result, Jacob is legally blind, deaf in one ear, and most likely will not be able to walk or talk.

It was a devastating time. Jacob would need so much, and the family did not know where to turn. True to her family background, she found ways to build something positive out of the situation. She began with her daughter’s obstetrician.

“He told us about PACER,” Colleen said. Though she had not yet called PACER, Colleen wanted to thank the doctor for the recommendation. She invited him to PACER’s 2002 Benefit, which featured one of his favorite singers, Aretha Franklin. While there, Colleen bid on some auction items. “Two days later, I received a call from Paula [Goldberg, PACER’s executive director],” she recalled. “She invited me to become involved.”

Colleen said yes and joined the Benefit Committee. That decision became part of the foundation for how the family would build PACER’s strength—and their own.

“It’s a healing place,” Colleen said. At PACER, she was with people who truly understood what it was like to have a child with a disability, or what it was like to be up all night with a child who does not sleep. “I could ask, ‘Where is a good place to go for therapy? Who is a good doctor for a child with disabilities?’” she said. It was a group with whom she could swap stories and gain strength. “Sometimes it’s just the hugs,” she said.

Building the Future

After working on the 2003 event, “Paula asked if I would co-chair the Benefit Committee,” Colleen said. She happily agreed. “The work PACER does is really important,” she explained. “The people there have walked this path before you and have wisdom.

“PACER gives me way more than I could ever give them,” she added.

For this year’s May 7 Benefit performance featuring Lionel Richie, Colleen wants to build one more thing: a message of gratitude for donors. “We want to get the message out about what PACER does and how important it is. These are real kids and real families. We want to let donors know how grateful we are for their support.”

Jacob, Colleen’s grandson, has benefited from PACER services.
The Benefit of Sisterhood

It is one thing to have a sister who volunteers. It is another to have a sister who volunteers her sisters to join the PACER Benefit Committee. It is still another thing when you have two sets of sisters serving on the same committee.

Then again, maybe it should not come as a surprise. PACER is all about families helping families. The sisterly connections are a mirror of PACER’s philosophy and unique strength.

Colleen McGough Wood, Mary Frey, and Judy Jaffee co-chaired last year’s Benefit and are taking on the role again. Mary and Judy are sisters, and this year, they invited another sister, Sara Schneider, to join them. Colleen then invited two of her sisters, Nicky Nagle and Mary Jean Sargent, and her sister-in-law, Janet McGough, to join the group.

“At the first committee meeting, as people were being introduced, we’d say, That’s my sister!” Nicky said. It turned into a funny bit, leading one man in the group to introduce himself and quip, “I’m not anybody’s sister!”

All the family togetherness is fun, but the real focus of the sisters is the work of the committee. “The entire Benefit Committee is made up of a group of wonderful, energetic, and committed volunteers, all with a common goal,” Judy said. “It’s really an honor to have the opportunity to contribute my time to PACER, and in a small way help to make a difference in the lives of children with disabilities and their families. That’s really what brings us all together.”

The Benefit of Sisterhood

Back row (left to right): Janet McGough, Nicky Nagle, Mary Jean Sargent, and Sara Schneider.
Front row (left to right): Colleen McGough Wood, Judy Jaffee, and Mary Frey.

Lionel Richie Saturday, May 7, 2005
PACER’s 23rd Annual Benefit • Minneapolis Convention Center

Benefit Events
Gourmet Dinner | 5PM (Tickets sold separately)
Silent Auction | 6PM
Live Auction | 8PM
Benefit Performance | 8PM
Patron Party* (After the performance)

Ticket Prices
$55 • $85 • $140* • $200*
$275* • $550*
*Tickets include Patron Party

Ticket Reservations
(952) 838-9000 | www.pacer.org

Tickets On Sale Now!
At five, Ryleigh Peltier is a bundle of energy. She loves My Little Pony ™, and like most little sisters, likes to play with her big brother (Chase, 7).

But for Ryleigh, the usual banter between siblings comes with difficulty. She has a speech disability and struggles to articulate words. The word “brother,” for example, comes out as “bug-eyed.” So does the word she means for “buttered.”

Though her immediate family can understand her, most people cannot. As a result, Ryleigh can be isolated from adults, peers, and social opportunities.

Articulation is Ryleigh’s only disability—and that is unusual. Most children with speech problems also have other disabilities, such as a hearing impairment or developmental delay.

When Ryleigh’s mom, Aimee Peltier, sought out special education services for her daughter, “I was told that the school district didn’t serve children with ‘speech only’ disabilities in a preschool environment,” Aimee said.

After talking with her mother, who has a master’s degree in special education, and two aunts, who are special education teachers, Aimee learned the information she received from the district was incorrect. That’s when she took a friend’s suggestion and called PACER.

Finding A Voice

John Hoffman picked up Aimee’s call. As the coordinator for early childhood programs at PACER Center, he is an advocate for young children facing big hurdles.

“John helped to give me a voice,” Aimee said, with obvious gratitude. “I’m a parent with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and I can get overwhelmed with information. John helped me figure out what information applied to my case. He told me what the law was, and he put it in a way I could understand it. I’d say, ‘tell me that a different way. Use an analogy.’ And he would.”

Prepared with the facts, she has continued to work with the school. “I’ve been at this two years now. I want the district to rethink how they serve children with speech-only disabilities,” Aimee said.

Ryleigh’s free-play time with peers, for example, is spent on structured language activities such as board games. Ideally, Aimee said, she would prefer to see the staff use everyday moments to teach her daughter. “If Ryleigh wants to play post office and says ‘mayo-man,’ that’s a perfect opportunity to work with her on articulating the letter ‘L,’” she said.

Aimee knows that struggles lie ahead. She also knows that John and PACER will continue to provide the support she needs. “Aimee has a lot of strengths and abilities,” John said. “PACER helps her understand her rights, roles, and responsibilities so she can make sure Ryleigh receives a free appropriate public education.”

“If PACER weren’t here, Ryleigh would be part of some cookie-cutter program instead of having an individualized plan,” Aimee said. “PACER helps me find my own voice and identify the strategies for helping Ryleigh receive the appropriate service for her. If it weren’t for PACER, the system would have stayed the same instead of moving forward.”
PACER’s 2nd Annual HOT Party, Cool Cause was another success, with nearly 700 guests enjoying the high-tech glamour of Minneapolis’ best sights and sounds. Presented by Marquette Plaza, HOT featured local lounge singer Tony Strong and headliner Boogie Wonderland, both of whom entertained guests well into the celebratory night. Proceeds benefit the programs of PACER.

On Saturday, Jan. 29, a top floor of Marquette Plaza was transformed into a retro showcase of technology, martini bars and lounges, and food banquets featuring an array of hors d’oeuvres from Rudolphs Bar-B-Que. The lights, graphics and Target Stage were designed by Nick Tietz, creative director of EckoFx Studios.

“HOT is such a fun and important event. It was the feel-good-boogie-schmooze night of the year!” said Tom Nelson and Martha Dayton, founders and current members of the Friends of PACER Advisory Board.

Nick Baltins, a young man who received services and support from PACER, spoke of his successes as a karate instructor, college graduate, and employee of Kaplan, Strangis & Kaplan. Baltins demonstrated karate moves and rallied the HOT Party guests before the evening’s prize drawings.

“People said they had a fabulous time,” said Sarah Johnson, co-chair of the HOT event. “Just by attending, they received so much…great music, good food, terrific gifts. It inspired them to give back and become involved. People recognize how much PACER provides to families of children with disabilities.”

"HOT is such a fun and important event. It was the feel-good-boogie-schmooze night of the year!"
Tom Nelson and Martha Dayton

Thank you to all HOT Party Sponsors:
(Listed in order of sponsorship level.)

Marquette Plaza
Rudolphs Bar-B-Que, Space 150, Target
EckoFx Studios, Fox 9 KMSP, Minnesota Twins, Tom Nelson and Martha Dayton
Bellie Studios, b-swing, Chris McArthur Photography, Crowne Plaza Northstar Hotel, Holgaard’s, IAN Inc., James Page Brewery, JWDA Inc., Kuether Distributing, Kino Flo, Lakeside Wine & Spirits, Lighthouse/Cinequipt, NVENT Designs, Orono Discovery Center, Phillips Distilling, Robert Mondavi, Simon Ventures, Smart Candle
Above: Some partygoers dressed for the occasion in fun retro wear.

Above: Boogie Wonderland performed on the Target stage and had everyone dancing all night long.

Above: Rudolph’s Bar-B-Que chefs Woody and Kevin. Rudolph’s was a major sponsor of the HOT Party.

Above: Paula Goldberg, PACER Executive Director, with Nick Baltins, guest speaker and youth served by PACER. Nick engaged the audience with stories of his success in life, work, and karate.

Above: 2005 HOT Party Co-chairs (left to right) Sarah Johnson, Michele Heimes, Ezie Simon, and Amy Lucas.
The companies listed on the following pages have generously donated their time and services to many of PACER’s recent events, including PACER Day at the Dome, PACER’s 25th Anniversary celebration and, just recently, the HOT Party, Cool Cause. Their support results in greater funds and contributions directed to PACER’s programs for children and young adults with all disabilities.

If you find yourself looking for a new wine, perhaps a mover to help you into a future home, or even a referral for one of your colleagues, please consider contacting one of these service providers.

By mentioning PACER, you magnify our thanks to the community that supports the development of PACER and the families it serves.

Partners of PACER is a new directory produced by PACER. It features only in-kind donors who have contributed to PACER events between July 1, 2004 and Jan. 31, 2005. Please look in the next PACER Partners for the companies who will have supported our 23rd Annual Benefit on Saturday, May 7, 2005.
Oroko Discovery Center
Community center
5050 Independence St.
Maple Plain, MN 55359
763.479.1530

PRODUCTION STUDIOS
Bellie Studios
Photography studios
2617 Hennepin Ave. E
Minneapolis, MN 55408
612.617.7724

Chris McArthur Photography
Commercial photography
2617 E Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55413
612.617.7724
Cmphotographs.com

Kino Flo
Production lighting company
10848 Cantara St.
Sun Valley, CA 91352
818.767.6528
www.kinoflo.com

Lighthouse/ Cinequipt
Production equipment rental
816 SE 9th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55409
612.629.9080
www.cinequipt.com

SMART CANDLE
Portable lighting and power
9429 Syndicate Ave. S
Bloomington, MN 55420
888.768.2635
www.smartcandle.com

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS
Minnesota Twins
MLB Baseball Team
34 Kirby Puckett Place
Minneapolis, MN 55415
612.375.1366
www.mntwins.com

RETAILERS
Hoigaard’s
Leader in outdoor equipment
3550 S Hwy 100
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
952.929.1351
www.hoigaards.com

Target.Com/Red Hot Shop
Target stores and retailer
1000 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55403
www.target.com

SCHOOLS
DeLaSalle High School
An urban Catholic school
1 DeLaSalle Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55401
612.676.7600
www.delasalle.com

SECURITY
Avalon Fortress Securities Corp
Full-service protection
9697 NW E River Rd.
Minneapolis, MN 55433
763.767.9111
www.avalonsecurity.com

TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN
b-swing inc.
Technology design services
800 Washington Ave. N, Suite 301
Minneapolis, MN 55401
612.752.1160
www.b-swing.com

JWDA, Inc.
On-demand creative services
7416 Washington Ave. S
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
952.936.7797
www.jwda.com

NVENT Designs
Design, fabrication services
2635 Brighton Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55418
612.782.1861
www.nventdesigns.com

Space150
Creative web services, design
213 2nd Ave. N, Ste. 150
Minneapolis, MN 55401
612.460.2803
www.space150.com

U-Trau
Printing and design
11720 E 49th Ave.
Denver, CO 80239
800.878.9620

REPLACEMENT OF PARTNERS OF PACER
Panera Bread
Bakery cafés
3345 Hazelton Rd.
Edina, MN 55435
952.835.7825
www.panera.com

Rudolphs Bar-B-Que
Restaurant and catering
1933 Lyndale Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 871-8855
www.rudolphsribs.com

RETROSALES
Graybow Communications
Audiovisual design corp
5340 Cedar Lake Rd.
Minneapolis, MN 55416
952.544.5555
www.graybow.com
It was a great birthday party. More than 250 PACER friends gathered on Sept. 20, 2004 to celebrate 25 years of helping families of children with all disabilities. From the young man who lives in a group home to some well-known speakers—friends of PACER came.

The program featured several inspiring speakers, including U.S. Rep. Jim Ramstad (R-3rd) and two young people helped by PACER, Mandy Frederickson and Brett Nelson. The evening culminated with the presentation of achievement certificates to the young adults on the honor roll. Each was recognized individually. Remarked one guest, “Their success is the true testimony of PACER’s 25 years of service.”

Norma Hexter Award

Four people received the Norma Hexter Award for outstanding volunteer service. Don Davidson, Kathy Graves, Nancy Lehrman, and Ruth Levine were all recipients of the prestigious award that captured the true spirit of the evening’s festivities.

PACER presents this award in memory of Norma Hexter, who was a warm, energetic, and effective volunteer for many years. Nine other individuals have previously received this honor. PACER is extremely fortunate to have many volunteers who give so generously of their time and expertise to help children with disabilities.

A section of the anniversary quilt, designed by Muffy Bennett and sewn by Mary Frey, commemorates PACER’s 25 years and is on display PACER’s main conference room.
IBM has been an outstanding corporate partner over the past two years, collaborating on EXITE Camp, a technology camp for girls with disabilities; Teaming for Technology for all the parent centers nationwide; and Web Adaptation, which makes web sites more accessible for people with disabilities.

In addition, IBM has provided computer equipment for the Simon Technology Center’s training lab. The partnership has been a win-win for both organizations.

IBM Presents Community Partnership Award to PACER at 25th Anniversary

Following her remarks at the 25th Anniversary celebration, Heidi Kraemer, IBM Minnesota Corporate Community Relations Manager (right), made a surprise announcement. She presented a prestigious IBM Minnesota Community Partnership award to PACER Center. Paula Goldberg, PACER Executive Director (left), accepted it.

Thanks PACER Center...

Throughout 2004 PACER received many thank you letters from parents and professionals. An example follows:

Dear PACER,

We want to thank you for all you do for children and their families. After attending many PACER workshops throughout the years, we gained the confidence to become good advocates for our own situation and now for others. Thanks to PACER, our son is a success story.

Our son graduated from high school and four years of college. There were many challenges and struggles along the way, but with the help from PACER we were able to take all the necessary steps for him to graduate and become a success in life. Many educators in his life didn’t always believe in him. We are so grateful that PACER did.

Our son is now an adult and living on his own with a family. We have moved on to advocating for others in our district. Keep up the good work. Thanks to PACER we have gained a wealth of knowledge to help others.

Sincerely,
Parents

United Way Donor Choice Program

The United Way accommodates employees who want to support PACER through their workplace campaigns.

PACER Center benefits from the donor choice programs of the Greater Twin Cities United Way, Tri-State United Way and others.

Please consider writing in “PACER Center” under “Other” when a United Way campaign pledge card is presented for your selections.

Thank you for helping us serve families of children with all disabilities.
Making Friends and Making a Difference

“Do you want to go to a movie this weekend?”

This is a pretty standard question for most teenagers, but unfortunately many teens with disabilities do not hear these words from friends. Win Bennett was sensitive to this issue because his sister Mara has disabilities. Win has included Mara in social activities with his own friends for years and thought other teens with disabilities would enjoy the same opportunities. That is how Fun Times started.

Teens with and without disabilities participating in Fun Times have attended Twins games, movies, and the Science Museum. Recently the group spent a Saturday morning at the Mall of America. If you would like more information about Fun Times, call (952) 838-9000 or visit on-line at www.pacer.org.

Toddler Tuesday and Change for Children

Families of children with all abilities enjoyed PACER’s first Toddler Tuesday on Feb. 22, a free event at the Mall of America. Children received hugs from the Berenstein Bears, watched a performance by the PACER Puppets, and enjoyed activities in PACER’s inclusive playtime environment.

PACER’s next Toddler Tuesday is April 5 and features TC, the MN Twins mascot. Attending families can receive information and materials from PACER’s Early Childhood Program, meet with a PACER advocate, and contribute their “change for children.”

Change for Children is an initiative of the Friends of PACER Advisory Board that seeks to engage families in community outreach and philanthropy. By collecting and donating loose coins, children learn that small change can make a big difference.

Above: Brandon Ziemke (center) is encouraged by Andy Ulseth (left) and Win Bennett (right) to touch a shark in the Touch Tank.

Left: Kayla Brick (left), Julia Marshall (center), and Alexandra Gray (right) are all smiles at Underwater World.

Right: Story time was a popular and fun event at Toddler Tuesday. Join TC, the MN Twins mascot, at the Toddler Tuesday on April 5.
PACER’s Bullying Prevention Web Site Receives Funding

PACER Center has received a challenge grant of $100,000 from the Robins, Kaplan, Miller and Ciresi LLP Foundation for Education, Public Health and Social Justice, a supporting organization of the Minneapolis Foundation. The grant will provide for the creation of the Bullying Prevention Project’s Web site on the condition that PACER raises matching funds.

PACER’s Bullying Prevention Web site will be innovative for all children, with a special emphasis on children with disabilities. The project will improve the quality of life for children with disabilities by educating children ages 7 to 12 years about bullying prevention through engaging formats that include animation, video-streaming, script-writing and poster contests, a question and answer segment, and a place to share personal stories. The content will be transferred to DVD for review and use by parents and educators and as an alternate format for use by children.

“We anticipate the Bullying Prevention web site will change attitudes and behavior,” said Paula Goldberg, PACER’s Executive Director.

Children’s access to education can be blocked by bullying behavior that is sometimes accepted by our society as a rite of growing up. Students who are bullied may grow angry, resentful, frightened, or apathetic about school. Children are at risk of short and long-term effects such as school avoidance, low self-esteem, depression, increased fear or anxiety, lower grades, and increased violence in the school.

How can I make my tax-deductible planned gift to PACER?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through a bequest as part of a will, specifying a dollar amount, a percent of the estate, or a residual of your estate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By creating a revocable or an irrevocable trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through a gift of life insurance by naming PACER as a beneficiary of an existing policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By purchasing a new insurance policy naming PACER as the owner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By giving a retirement account or an IRA, designating PACER as the final beneficiary of any unused funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By making a gift of appreciated stock or assets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you would like to make a tax-deductible planned gift, please contact Mary Schrock, development director, at (952) 838-9000.

PACER Friendraising in Florida

Above: Dwight Opperman and PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg share information and stories about how PACER opens doors of possibilities for families of children with disabilities at a “friendraiser” in Naples, Florida. Opperman, a long time PACER supporter, was host of the event for Minnesota “snowbirds” to raise awareness for PACER and its programs.

Right: Al and Tony Cady (left) join PACER Advisory Board members Mary Sue and Steve Simon (right) at the January gathering in Naples.
OPERATION DOUGH-NATION®

Visit Panera Bread and support PACER by making contributions at participating cashier stations. Panera matches all contributions collected throughout the year and donates the proceeds to PACER programs.

KEEPING IN TOUCH/E-MAIL

Opportunities to be involved at PACER can be found online at www.pacer.org.

Sign up to receive the PACER e-newsletter and other communications. Please send your e-mail address to pacer@pacer.org.

PACER’s 23rd ANNUAL BENEFIT featuring Lionel Richie

Saturday, May 7, 2005
Minneapolis Convention Center

Tickets are on sale now! Please call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or purchase your tickets online at www.pacer.org.

In addition, you can:

- Donate items to the Silent or Live Auctions.
- Become a corporate sponsor.
- Sell raffle tickets for opportunities to win unique prizes!
- Hang posters in your local neighborhood, store, or office building.
- Volunteer the day of the event.

For further information, please call Nancy Kleve at (952) 838-9000.

PACER Development Corner

Building A Message ............... 1
PACER Volunteer Profile .......... 1
Benefit of Sisterhood .......... 2
PACER Benefit ............... 2
Challenging the Vision .......... 3
HOT Party, Cool Cause .......... 4
Partners of PACER .......... 6
Special Pull-out Section .......... 6
Celebrating Silver .......... 8
IBM Community Award .......... 9
Thanks PACER .......... 9
Change for Children and Toddler Tuesday .......... 10
Making Friends and Making A Difference: Fun Times .......... 10
Bullying Prevention .......... 11
PACER Friendraiser .......... 11
Development Corner .......... 12

In This Issue

PACER Partners is published by the Development Office at PACER.

©2005 PACER Center

PACER Executive Director
Paula F. Goldberg

Director of Development and Partners Editor
Mary Schrock

Communications Coordinator
Pat Bill

Partners Contributing Writers
Breia Euteneuer, Willa Hathaway, and Marcia Kelly

Designer
Traci Meyer

PACER Center, Inc.
8161 Normandale Boulevard
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

(952) 838-9000 voice
(952) 838-0190 TTY
(952) 838-0199 fax
(800) 537-2237 toll-free
E-mail: pacer@pacer.org
www.pacer.org

Mary Schrock, PACER Development Director

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2723
Minneapolis, MN

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights
8161 Normandale Boulevard
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

Address Service Requested